

Seasonable Words:

THE
SUM of A
SERMON

Preached on the Late
Publick F A S T,

January the 14th, 1707. 1708

By DANIEL BURGESS.

*If ye will enquire, enquire ye, return, come, Isa.
21. 12.*

*Come, let us return unto the Lord, for he hath torn,
and he will heal us, Hos. 6. 1.*

*The prudent foreseeth the evil and hideth himself, but
the simple pass on and are punished, Prov. 27. 12.*

L O N D O N :

Printed by R. Tookey, for T. Parkhurst, at the Bible
and Three Crowns in Cheapside, near Mercers-
Chappel. MDCCVIII.



To the not a Few who have
taken up the Arms of Im-
portunity, and some others
also, for this Publication.

S I R S,

Here is little more than the Ske-
leton of our Fast-Day's Dis-
course. One, in the Ministry whereof,
I am made to believe, that the North-
Wind and South blew with a very gra-
cious Gale! giving more than common
Feelings unto Souls Regenerate, Un-
regenerate, and of doubtful State:
Insomuch, that the Honour which Di-
vine Grace hath put upon so mean a
Thing, will make Amends enough for
whatever Contumelies it shall now meet
with among Corinthians and Atheni-
ans. And, being so secured, it ventures

into the Light, without Fear of the
Lions in its Way. For the Truth is;
not your Importunitys, but the many
Testimonys of the 'foresaid Gale of
Wind, have thus hurried it into the
Book-shop. Beside which, I say no
more but this; May sovereign Grace
make these so seasonable Words,
to be yet more Forcible Words, and
Effectual unto the proper Ends of them.
And, may you and your dearest
ones ever Be, and Appear to be, of
the Blessed Number. The Num-
ber of God's Favourites, whose Name
is, A People near unto him. *Amen.*

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General F A S T,

January the 14th, 1707.

Sam. IV. 8. *Draw nigh to God, and
he will draw nigh to you.*

UNto all God's Thunders we have
long been Deaf Adders. From
London to the Mount, all have
seemed to be such: And yet, even yet,
his Compassions fail not. Again, yet
again, His Majesty speaks, and calls most
graciously. For, if I understand it, this
is the Voice of God unto all *Great Britain*,

this Day; His Gracious, Glorious, and Wondrous Voice, in so few Words comprehending the whole Sea of his *Precepts* and *Commands* laid on us, with the whole Ocean of his *Promises* and *Encouragements* given unto us: And consequently giving us the whole Collection of all *Antidotes* against sinful Presumption, and of all *Cordials*, against our as sinful Despair: Unto both whereof we are alike prone. This therefore have I chose for the Subject of this Day's Discourse.

And, waving Methods more *Fashionable*, I take to this plain One, as for You more *Profitable*. This, of drawing forth your Instruction, in a few Orderly Positions.

P. 1. *There is a God, a God in Heaven, as surely as a Sun in the Firmament.* Yes, as little Notice as is taken of him, in our *Great Britain* it self! Verily there is a God, Millions of Her Subjects who never saw Her, do yet *Believe that we have a Queen*: Altho' their whole Life testifies that they deny, or at least *Doubt, whether we have any God or no.* Oh Horror and Trembling, where are you! Come ye and seize us; come ye and fill us. *Atheism* holy *Greenham* used to say, was the Sin

Sin of *England*. And much more it seems at this Day to be so! St. *James* (as all the Pen-men of the Holy Scriptures) takes it for granted, and unquestionable, (you see) that a God there is; of this God's *Being, Nature and Attributes, Subsistence* in Three distinct Persons, &c. You have lately heard much: Of his *Relations* only, I shall speak a little at present. The Word GOD is a Name of Relation as well as of Essence: And it surely imports, and shou'd be taken by us to signify these Relations.

1. *Of a sole Creator. i. e.* Maker of *All things* out of Nothing. Maker of *Man*, next in Nature to Angels, and for the Work of Angels. Maker of *Inferior Creatures*, to serve us.

2. *A sole Benefactor. i. e.* From whom we HAVE receiv'd Good in all *past Time*; Do receive it in the *present Time*; MUST receive all we have in *Future Time*, and to Eternity also.

3. *A sole Proprietor. i. e.* Owner, having with a *Power and Strength, Authority and Right* to do what he pleaseth

with us; as the Potter with the Clay. Authority to *Keep us, Destroy us, Exalt* or *Abase us*.

4. *A sole Ruler. i. e.* Governour by Law; Law *Directing* us what to do; *Obliging* us by Promises to do as it Directs; *Terrifying* by Threats of Punishment from Doing otherwise.

5. *A sole Judge. i. e.* One that passeth Sentence on every Soul: Sentence according unto his Law; Sentence of *Absolution*, or of *Condemnation*.

6. *A sole Rewarder too. i. e.* One who doth as surely *Execute* his Sentence passed, as he doth ever *Pass* it. *In hoc Discors turba consentit.* The Three Words, Pagan, Jewish, Christian, All do agree in this. But,

Of *Disbelief*, and *Faith feigned*, and *weak Faith*, what Confessions have we to make this Day? Mill-stone, Rock, and Adamant are the Hearts that do not Feel it, and Smartingly. Brethren; if we Love God, and Honour the Queen, as I hope we do; we cannot but straitway lift up *Moses's Prayer*, *Exod. 33. 18.* We cannot

cannot but cry out, *Good God and Father of Jesus Christ, we beseech thee, make Queen and Subjects this Day, more than ever, to see thy Glory. To see thine Excellent Glory; and all Creatures but as Counterfeit and Vain Glory. Amen.*

P. 2. *The God that is our Creator, &c. is sinfully departed from, by Mankind; and hath therefore, on his Part, Righteously departed from Mankind. As God and Devils, so God and Men are become Enemys; Fighting Enemys, with Open War proclaimed.*

Yes, France and Britain are less at War than Earth and Heaven. Had there been no Enmity, there cou'd have been no Command for our Drawing nigh to God; nor any Promise of God's Drawing nigh to us.

You will not understand this of Local Departure; that's impossible. Creatures cannot Live, Move, or Be, but in their God; so very near in Place they are, and cannot but be. We speak of Moral Departure from Each other: That is, Turning from Friends to being Enemys unto Each other. Man has Departed from God, and God from Man, is as much as to say, Man's Soul hath Hated God, and God's Soul hath Abhorred Man. Spiritually they are
Stone-

Stone-Blind, who see not this. But such Darknes it self, are Multitudes among us: So perfectly Blind in *British* Sunshine; such *Egyptians* in our *Goshen*. Briefly, it may be of Use to set before you the Demonstrative Effects of the mutual sad Departure we speak of: Inasmuch as it is even *Denied* by some, not known by many, *Mischievously Forgotten* by *Most*; and I might have said, by *All*. Were it not that such Departure had been, it is sure, none of these Things cou'd have been.

1. *The Corruption of all our Facultys.* Mind, Memory, Conscience, Will, Affections, Active Powers, all full of Moral Sores as *Job's* Body of Leproseness.

2. *Terrors of Conscience.* Those Forecasts of the Eternal Tophet; of which some are Loquacious, like *Francis Spira's*: Others are Mute and Silent, as *Cain's*, when he fell to Building. (There's much more of this Hell upon Earth, than seems to be Apprehended by many.)

3. *Bodily Diseases:* Whose Name is Legion. Physicians, in our Inquisitive Age,

Age, cannot yet number 'em. But all, save Idiots, know, that they far Exceed the Distempers falling on the Bodys of Brute Creatures. Exceed 'em in Number, in Frequency, &c.

4. *Painful Remedys.* Bitter Draughts, Cruel Causticks, Deep Incisions, Frightful Amputations; Cutting off Hands, Arms, Legs.

5. *Distracting Wants.* Not meerly of *Superfluities*, but very *Necessaries*: Of Food and Raiment. The Poverty against which Holy Agur prayed.

6. *The Four Elements, Murder of Man.* Earth, Gaping and Swallowing up; Water, Drowning; Air, Poysoning; Fire, Burning Houses, Towns, &c.

7. *Brute Creatures, Scorn of Man, and Rage against us.* Most Flying from us; Many Stinging, Biting, Kicking, &c. Killing Man, their Lord and King.

8. *Personal Quarrels and Mutinys, and National Wars.* Monstrous! that Tygers, Lions, and Bears, shou'd better Agree than Reason.

Reasonable Creatures. The *Wilderness* have much more Peace and Quiet than the *Towns and Citys which know There is a God*; a God Judging in the Earth.

9. *Birth and Death Pains*. Pains generally endured at *Ingress* and *Egress*; at Coming into, and Going out of the World.

10. *Hell Torments*. Ask not what these are: May you never feel what they are. If you get to Heaven, where you will well Use the Knowledge of them, you will Fully know what they are. On Earth you do know thus much, I hope. They are Torments unto *Extremity*, and to all *Eternity*. Torments as great as Creatures can Bear, and as Long as their Incensed God can Inflict.

Come on, now, and Think. Is *Ignorance*, *Error*, and *Forgetfulness* of God's Departure from us, and of our Departure from Him? Are these Gnats or Camels; Moats or Beams, do they seem unto you? From one End of *Britain* to the other, these Sins are Rife. And for these, what Sackcloth shou'd be put on? what Renting of Garments made? what
Crys

Crys to God be poured forth? If you love your God, your Queen, your selves, your Fellow-Subjects, your and their Posterity; surely you will Ejaculate with me, and *Pray that God the Father of Lights, would this Day give perfect Blinds to receive some Sight! and make both Queen and Subjects, Subjects of all Ranks, to See and Consider better than ever before, the Mournful Truth of the Mutual Departure, and to Infer the Dutys that the said Truth alarmeth unto. By the Law is the Knowledge of Sin: O Gracious God, by the Law give unto Queen and Subjects more Knowledge of Sin, Rom. 7. 7, 9. Amen.*

P. 3. *The God from whom Mankind hath Departed, and who hath Departed from Mankind with so much Hostility, hath Provided and Publish'd a Way for a Mutual Return: For our Obedient and Penitent Return unto Him; and for his Gracious and Condescending Return unto us. Devils have no Way from Hell unto Heaven; but we have a Way from Earth unto Heaven. As Few as there are who Find it, or Desire the Knowledge of it, a Good Old there is, a Tried, Sure and Plain, tho' Narrow Way; and One, only One. For else this*
Pre-

Precept and Promise in our Text had been but a Mockery of us. Nor can we otherwise Construe the Text, than as if it had been said in so many Words, Draw nigh to God in the Way, the *New and Living Way* which he has Provided. Provided of his own *Contrivance*, and at his Vast *Expence*. In short,

1. *Our Text supposeth this*, as hath been said, and is too manifest to want Proof. Candle in such Sun-shine, I will not go about to set up.

2. *Our Holy Bible is full of this provided Way of Return*. Yes, and is named the *Word of Reconciliation*, 2 Cor. 5. 19. And alas, what were it worth, if it did not Reveal this, the Tidings of Great Joy? Great, and indeed the Foundation of all Joy!

3. *Our Religion without this Way provided wou'd have been an Impossible Thing*. God and Men must have been for ever as Unreconcilable as God and Devils, Psal. 130. 3.

4. *Our Saviour, the Maker of this Way, by his Oblation and Intercession, is most am-
ply*

ply set forth in Old and New Testament. He is the Sum and Substance of both of 'em. On John 14. 6. you have lately Heard much.

5. *Our Comforter, our other Comforter, besides Christ the Way-maker cou'd have been no Comforter, without such a Way made.* Nor did He condescend to be sent unto us for any Thing but to Prepare us for, Bring us into, and Strengthen and Chear us to Walk becomingly in this Way, whereof we are speaking.

6. *Our Ministry is nothing but the Gospel Ministry of this Way.* What is not hereof is what the Holy Ghost cannot be expected to Own and Co-operate, or Work by for Good. Ministers Negligent of this One, New and Living Way, may be Sent of Men too often. Nor may it be Denied, but that *in Judgment they are also sent by God.* For Ministers there are whom Judicially God doth send to one and another Place: Sends so, and no otherwise than as he sends Sword and Pestilence. Now,

Bochims, Places of Tears, our Places of Worship should be made this Day, for
the

the dismal Neglect of God's *Way of Reconciliation* Provided for us. Neglect by Preachers and Hearers; Hearers Rich and Poor, Old and Young. *Some* not getting so much as Knowledge; *Others* getting no more than a Brain-Knowledge of this Way; *None of us* getting to know it so as we ought to know it. Neither so *Affectionately*, nor so *Practically* as to our selves, nor so *Communicatively* unto others as we ought.

Nor is this of ours such a Fast as God requires, surely, if with bitter Grief and Shame we lift not up such a Prayer unto God as this: *Good Lord, upon our Souls, and upon our Queen's, and upon our Fellow Subjects, make a deeper Print of John 14. 6. 2 Cor. 5. 19. &c. Amen.*

P. 4. God providing and proclaiming a Way for our drawing nigh to Him, and for his drawing nigh unto us; doth also by many Messengers and Means, call all the Visible Church to draw nigh to him in that Way. Never did any Father so strive to save his Child, as God doth to save his Visible Church. Never did Parent in this World use so many Ways and Means, and give so much Time and Space for the Recovery

very of a Prodigal. For, *James* is not the only Messenger; *Moses, Prophets, Evangelists, Apostles,* all were so. And as *James* doth, did they also Call all Sorts of People to Draw nigh to God; not excepting *Gross and Scandalous Sinners,* or *Close Double-minded Hypocrites;* any more than *James* excepteth them. Come, take to Mind then a brief Account of the many Ways and Means, which Divine Grace useth to bring all into this Way that leadeth to Life.

1. *God Offers and Invites all,* Isa. 55. 1.
2. *God Instructs all the Willing,* John 7. 17. Psal. 25.

3. *God Commands Authoritatively All.* All from the Throne down to the Mill.
1 John 3. 23.

4. *God Alarms all with Threats, and Charmeth all with Promises,* Mark 16. 16.
2 Cor. 7. 1, &c.

5. *God useth Obsecration.* He prays and beseeches all to draw nigh. 2 Cor. 5. 20.

6. *God giveth some Aids of his Holy Spirit too, unto all.* The Holy Ghost does *Enlighten 'em;* *Restrain 'em* from many Sins, *Convince 'em* of their Duty and Interest to draw nigh to God. Heb. 6. 4.

Obj. But is it any more than Nothing, that Men can do for Drawing nigh, when they have all these bestowed upon 'em?

Sol. Yes, it is. And be it well observed,

1. We cannot of our selves take the first Step into the Blessed Way; no more than a dead Man take one Step out of the Grave.

2. But by preparatory Exercises we may get better Disposition for receiving the Divine Grace that brings into the Way. This gat the Scribe, by our Saviour said to be not far from the Kingdom of God, Mark 12. 24. Which is something surely, tho' it be short of Saving Grace.

3. This is as Dryness in Wood, which is no Degree of Fire, no Particle of Fire, no Beginning of Fire in it: But it is such a Disposition for better receiving of Fire when it is brought unto it, as is considerable. And Wot ye,

4. Altho' God hath not bound himself to Bring none into his Way of Salvation, but the better prepared Souls; yet hath he Bound all Men to Improve their Talents, and to so Fore-dispose themselves for his Saving Grace; to wit, by Abandoning Lewd Companions, Advising with Soul-Physicians, Reading,

Reading, Hearing, Meditating of Law
and of Gospel, &c.

But where, if not in Great Britain,
have God's Messengers and Messages been
all made light of? Where have his Bonds
been broken asunder, his Cords cast behind
the Backs of Men? Of Men Rich and Fat
in the Earth; and of Poor going down
to the Dust. O the Patience and Long-
suffering of God, that hath at least res-
pited Judgment, and not Revenged this
Quarrel as yet upon us! Can you chuse?
I hope, and I know that some of you
cannot chuse but Rent their Hearts this
Day, for this Abomination of Abomina-
tions; and will certainly joyn with me
in this Ejaculatory Prayer: O Long-suffer-
ing God, who wilt not, who canst not be an
Always-suffering God; Engrave, Engrave,
Engrave more deeply on our Hearts, and on
Magistrates, Ministers and Peoples Hearts,
Heb. 2. 3. and 2 Cor. 6. 1. Amen.

P. 5. It is but Inchoatively and Incom-
pletely that God's best Servants do Draw
nigh to Him, or He unto them in this
World. Heaven is the proper Presence-
Chamber; and while we are in the Body we
are comparatively absent from the Lord. As

good as Fools fancy it is to be here, and as much as they do like Earth better than Heaven, 'tis sure, that next unto Hell, Earth is the very worst Place of the whole Creation. For, no Doubt but the Precept of the Text reaches Saints as well as others; and so does the Promise. The nighest Drawers to God may draw yet nigher in Duty. Yes, and unto such as God draws nighest in Favour and Bounty, He may, and he will draw yet nigher unto 'em.

Evident this Imperfectness of our Communion with God will be, if we consider,

1. *The Remains of Sin in us*, James 3.
2. 1 John 1. 7. Eccl. 7. 20. Rom. 7, &c.
2. *The Conflict of remaining Sin, with Grace in us*, Gal. 5. 17. Rom. 7. 19.
3. *The Chronical, Temporary Very Reigns and Prevalences of remaining Sin. Its Captive Leadings*, Rom. 7. 23, 24.
4. *The Lord Christ's Command Daily to pray for the Forgiveness of our Sins*, Mat. 6.
5. *The Chastnings and Scourgings with which God followeth his Favourites, Saints, and Churches*, Heb. 12. Psal. 89. 31, 32.
6. *The Declaration of God, that especially*

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ally He will punish his own People for their Iniquitys, Amos 3. 2. 1 Pet. 4. 17.

Tho' briefly, be it here Suggested and Observed. As in the Text, the *Profane*, who declare their Sin, as *Sodom*, are called to come unto themselves, and to their God. As the *Hypocrites*, who seem, tho' they do but seem to draw nigh unto God, are called to lie and dissemble no longer; but in Spirit and in Truth to turn unto Him. So, are *true Israelites*, even sincere Converts, and sound Believers, called to convert farther, and draw yet nigher to God. Neither is it the Sin of the *Profane* only and the *Hypocrite*, that we have to confess and to lament this Day; or their *Initial* Conversion that we have to pray for. No; but no less are we to Consider, and to Mourn for the Follies and Faults of real Saints; and to pray for the *Gradual Conversion* of the best of them; inas-much as their Sins are upon many Accounts, more provoking unto God than the Sins of the Unregenerate. Holy Mens Sins

1. Are against more Light and Knowledge than others.

2. Are after Experience of the Sweetness of

of Holiness, and the Gall and Bitterness of Sin, never tasted by others.

3. *Are after richest Mercy shewn them:* Like the Rebellions of a Thousand Times forgiven Traitor.

4. *Are after God's Exaltation of them:* And like the Treasons of one Adopted to be a King's Son and Heir also.

5. *Are against Promises, Vows and Oaths;* which never do Unregenerate Men heartily bind themselves with unto Obedience.

6. *Are such Sins as do much more harden the Hypocrite and the Profane,* and scandalize the Ways of God, and give greatest Occasion to the Enemies of God to Blaspheme. In short, Hell must needs break loose in a Land when real or reputed *Vines and Fig-trees* do monstrously bear the same as *Thorns and Thistles*: When little Difference is seen, but the *Doves* shew as much Venom as the *Serpents*; and the *Lambs* themselves do bark as *Dogs*, and as ravenously rend and tear their Brethren, as the most *Notorious Wolves*.

Obj. Some have taught that all this and much more is true; but nevertheless God

is Love, and nothing but Love unto Believers. Yes, and that he seeth not any Sin in Believers, so as to be angry with them. No, but is as well pleased with a David in his Adultery as in his Penitence; and with a Peter in his Swearing, Cursing and Denying of his Master, as in his weeping bitterly, &c. Arguing that God being not Angry, they have no Reason to be Sorry, to Fast, Mourn, &c.

Sol. Monsters! Such Monsters have been indeed: But Great Britain, tho' too too much an Africa still, is (as far as I know) now rid of those Monsters. Incomparable Gatake's Vindication of Num. 23. 21. from its Perversion by the Old Monsters, I have more than once shewn you. Suffice it at this Time to say this only.

1. In the Person of Godly Souls, One Apostle saith, OUR God is a Consuming Fire, Heb. 12. 9.

2. Judgment, another Apostle saith, must begin at the House of God, 1 Pet. 4. 17.

3. 'Tis often we read of God's Wrath breaking forth against choice Servants of his; and his then taking Vengeance on their Inventions, when he forgave their Iniquitys.

4. *It's remarkable what Tempered Relations God taketh towards us, as on purpose to work and keep a Tempered Frame of Heart in us. Ex. gr. Oft He's represented as a Tender Father; yes, and oft He is represented as an Holy and Just Judge. Or, in a Word, I will say, He's represented as a Fatherly Judge. Not so a Judge as to be no Father; No, nor so a Father, as to be no Judge. A Father he is to Believers: Yes, but such a Judge also, that their Sin makes the best of them need an Advocate with him, 1 John 2. 1. Come to his Throne of Fatherly Grace they may, with the Humble Boldness of Children; yea, so Call on him they must as their Father: But all their Life Time they must Sojourn on Earth in Fear, because he is their Judge also. Yes, and without Respect of Persons (as an Impartial Judge) Judgeth every Man according to his Work, 1 Pet. 1. 17, &c.*

5. *It's necessarily therefore, that our Divines do Distinguish between Judgment of Revenge, and Judgment of Castigation: Affirming always (agreeably to the Holy Scriptures) that God doth verily Judge both Saints and Sinners, yet with very great Difference. He maketh Davids and Solomons*

Solomons to feel the Bitterness of their Sins; but not as *Cains* and *Judas's* to feel it unto the utmost Desert of their Sins: God severely strikes his offending Favorites for far less Offences than he useth to smite others: Insomuch that if we should judge by Outward Events, we should mistake his *Darlings* for the *Least Beloved* of his Family. But ever it must be remembered, All and Every of the Divine Strokes on a Believer are *Medicinal and Preventive*, and never contrarily *Penal and Destructive*. They are Strokes of God a Judge, but in Christ a most Gracious Fatherly Judge: Strokes for a stinging Remembrance of Sin in Time past; and for harder-straining *Vigilance* and *Diligence* against it for Time to come.

But *Cynthia aurem*: By this Excursion I shall appear to presume *Great Britain's Best People* to be less good than they *Need* to be, they *Ought* to be, and they *Might* be. This I cannot deny; nor am I afraid or ashamed to Confess: Rather am I afraid to Hide it; afraid to forget or omit Imitating the Holy Exemplary Apostles, whom we never find Writing to any *Churches* or *Saints* so Good, but still they pressed 'em

be better; yes and to excel themselves as well as their Neighbours.

I will not be positive: But humble myself so far as to profess unto you, for ought that I do know, the Rebukes of God that are this last Year fallen on us, have been brought on us as *much* or *more*, by the Sins of People *Really* or *Reputedly* *Godly*, or *both*, than by the Sins of Any, yea of all other People: Which will be no Paradox, I presume, unto any Christian of Senses exercised to discern; and who doth thoughtfully Observe what All do see; *to wit*,

1. *Best Peoples Contributing to all the Sins of the Worst Sorts*; not mourning for 'em, not Reproving of 'em, too often Encouraging 'em, and (when in their Power to do the contrary) Tolerating 'em, &c.

2. *Best Peoples undeniable seeking every one Himself*; not the Interests of Christ and Christianity: Hot as Fire for Mammon, Cold as Ice and Snow for Religion.

3. *Best Peoples Falling (may I not say, Running) into Dissentions and Contentions concerning Mint, Annise and Cummin*, with that Zeal and Activity which ought not
to

to be withheld from Things weightier; to wit, the Law and Gospel.

4. *Best Peoples intermitting of Dutys; their Cold Heartless performing of them; their Horrid Total Omitting of some, and those exceedingly Important Ones, Catechising of Children, &c.*

5. *Best People's Vain Company-keeping unnecessarily; their Unedifying Converses one with another: Not provoking one another to Love and Good Works; and shewing Abundance of Dross in the very Gold they produce: Not taking the Advantages of Queen Anne's Reign to promote the Doctrine and Practice of Christianity. Shall I add?*

6. *Best Ministers too much studying to please rather than profit Hearers; and the best Sort of Hearers chusing their Ministers, not so much as Physicians to Heal, as Musick-masters to Delight 'em.*

Upon these so few Hints given, I appeal to your Consciences: Can you really think, that these *Best People* have contributed nothing to the Rebukes under which this *Fast-Day* is called for? Are even these, so *Righteous*, that they need no Repentance? Calls not God these very Children of his to draw nigher to him, think you? Certainly

tainly he does: And unless this Call of his be comply'd with, I cannot see Ground for Hope that He will turn from his present Wrath, and save us from our present Fears. No, whatever *Reformation of the Manners of Lewd People*, should be Effected, I should have small Hope. If then you dread the Awful Things that seem to be in God's Treasurys of Wrath against us: If you love your selves or *Great Britain*; and would not that both should feel the threatned *Terrible Things in Righteousness*; Joyn, Joyn every one of you, in this most necessary Prayer; *Cleanse, O Lord, cleanse by the Inspiration of thy Holy Spirit, the cleanest of Souls in Great Britain! Our best of Queens make better; Our best Subordinate Rulers make better; Our best Ministers of thy Word, make better; Our best Masters of Familys, and Parents of Children, and Tutors of 'em make better; Good Lord, together make that British Swine may be kept from Wallowing in the Mire; and thy British Children, even Little Children may leave and keep themselves from Idols; more conspicuously leave 'em, and more conscientiously and circumspectly keep from 'em. Amen.*

P. 6. *God may not be Expected to Draw nigh to us with Effects and Evidences of his Mercy, before we do Draw nigh to him, in Real and Visible Duty. Rebels that will not first Bow shall surely Break. None may Expect to have Pardon before they Ask Pardon; and that Becomingly. Tho' without Rebels Asking, the King Eternal provided a WAY for their Pardon and very Exaltation: Yet that Grace of his first Humbleth before it Pardoneth the Rebel. Brings it Weary and Laden unto Immanuel, before it saves from the Wrath abiding on the Condemned Wretch, John 3. 36. The Promise in our Text is so annexed to the Duty, that you cannot but Apprehend this to be intended in it, And so Natural and Rational is it in it self, so Honourable unto God, so Profitable also for Offenders themselves, that they shou'd first Bow, Stoop, and Turn to their God Offended; that this Standing Law of Heaven for our first Drawing nigh to God, deserves all Praise and Thanks, Nothing of Blame, nothing of our Dislike, doth it deserve.*

Prolixity wou'd exceed your Patience, if not my own Strength, with respect unto Repeated Labour in the Evening.

I confine therefore what I add, unto these Particulars.

1. *Thus, ever, did God's Word run, Zech. 13. Turn ye unto me and I will Turn unto you. Malach. 3. 7. Return unto me and I will Return unto you.*

2. *Thus Nature it self requires. What? Doth not ev'n Nature it self Teach, that in Reconciliation the sinful Prodigal Son shou'd first Stoop to the Righteous Gracious Father. The Subject first Stoop to his King; the faulty Subject unto the blameless King. The All-needing Servant to the Nothing-needing Master and Lord, &c.*

3. *Thus the Honour of God requires it to be. For, Reproachful it wou'd be unto God's Crown and Dignity, to Stoop first unto Rebels. Yes, unto Rebels so continuing; and preferring the Usurper, Satan, above Him. Most deeply Reproachful it wou'd be, unto all his Glorious Attributes; his Wisdom, Power, Holiness, &c.*

4. *Thus our Profit requires it to be. For, without Duty, we are unprepared for Mercy. Shou'd God throw richest Pearls unto Swine; alas, while they continue Swine, Pearls cou'd be of no Use or Price unto them. Shou'd God pardon a Sinner without his first Believing or Coming*

Coming to Him by Faith, it wou'd be but as a King's Pardoning of a Traitor, that is full of Pestilential Ulcers, and is Dying of's Leprosy.

O that it were considered; *Impenitence*, and *Unbelief*, and *Disobedience*, are considerable. (1.) As *Deserving Causes* of Misery. (2.) And as *Working Causes* of it. And (3.) As *Misery and Curse* it self.

5. Thus therefore bath God ever Dealt with Sinners. Indeed, He first Called Adam, before Adam called Him. And so he doth every Child of Adam. But how? He calls 'em first, to Terrify 'em. His Spirit's first Work is of Bondage. And first doth that Holy Spirit make them Bow, Cry, Call, Come by Faith, Draw nigh to God, in and thro' Christ, before that God Draws nigh unto them in *Complacential Favour*, and with his *Consolations*, John 3. ult, &c.

6. Thus ordinarily also God deals with Saints, and Churches of Saints, when they break their Peace with him; and he visits their Iniquitys with Rods, with Judgments Spiritual and Temporal.

Ordinarily, I say, He doth deal so; as the whole Scripture expressly Testifys, Jer. 18. 7, 8. and Texts without Number. So much

much for the most Part, He thus deals; that a People obtaining of God's Mercy, without first Returning unto Him, hath a very Cannot, a very Impossibility put upon it, 2 Chron. 24. 20. *Why Transgress ye the Command of the Lord, that ye CANNOT Prosper?* But we do, or ought to Observe, that God exerciseth his Sovereignty, acts very Arbitrarily, in his Dispensations of both Mercys and Judgments: Yes, towards both Nations and Persons..

1. *Longer doth God keep off Judgments from some more Guilty Souls, and Kingdoms, than from others less Guilty, many times. And,*

2. *Favour great He shews where Sin more abounds, and severely He punisheth Families and Nations wherein it less abounds.*

3. *Where scarcely One Soul doeth Good, He sometimes forbeareth; and where so much as but One (Achan) doeth Evil, He bends his Bow and shoots his Arrows.*

4. *The Prayer of One Moses hath one while saved Israel; and at another Time, a Noah, a Daniel, and a Job, shall Deliver but their own Souls.*

5. *He hath also proceeded so far sometimes, as to forbid his Servants to pray for Mercy to Offenders. But I may not Expatiate.*

Look-

Looking back to the former Five Positions, be it confessed, I am ready to exclaim of them, and this, *Who hath Believed them? And unto whom shall the Arm of the Lord be revealed this Day, for bringing of their Souls unto a right Faith of 'em?* How wretchedly all the Six of 'em have been *Unlearnt, Unconsidered, and by some Derided*, I leave you to judge! Particularly, I wou'd ask what One among our selves hath this Day either *Mourn'd or Pray'd*, so as to duly manifest our true Faith, and Heart Perswasion of this Sixth Position. Oh that I cou'd tell you of my self, more than I can tell you! But, as I feel a Constraint to Pray, so do many of you, I hope, feel it, to Joyn and Unite in this Prayer: *Good Lord, let not our Fast, our Prayer, our Sermon, and our Souls, and our Countrey too be lost! And Oh, preventively grant, that We, that our Queen, our Nobility, our Gentry, our Commonalty, our Army, our Fleet, our Ministers, and all their Flocks, our Conform and Nonconforming Ministers and Flocks; grant that All may this Day have our Faith encreased! Our Faith of the Unexpectableness of thy Return unto Mercy, before our Return unto Duty! Lord, encrease this our Faith! Amen.*

With these few Things Entreated, Charged, and Exhorted, our Discourse shall conclude.

E. 1. Remember ye, that Drawing nigh to God is *All our Duty*; and God's Drawing nigh to us is *all his Mercy*. And, they are not the *Business and Priviledge of a peculiar Day*. Wo is ours, if our Drawing nigh to God be not our *Every Day's Employment*; and if his Drawing nigh to us be not our *Every Day's Enjoyment*.

E. 2. Abide ye, Mourning for the Sins of Britain: Yes, of the whole Earth and World: Praying the *Supream Defender of the Faith*, to be also the *Promoter of it*, from the Rising of the Sun to the Going down. Especially, to *Water and Encrease it in Great Britain*.

E. 3. Be ye *Mindful of what is Possible, and of what is Probable, and of what is Certain*. Possible it is that so Doing, you may save many beside your selves. For the Sake of a Few God will sometimes save many, Gen. 18. 32. Job 22. 30, &c. Probable it is that *Your Zeal may provoke many*. (Tho' sometimes but One, and He a
 POOR

Poor Man too, One may do much good; as *Eccles. 9. 14, 15.*) One Burning Stick will oft set many Burning, *2 Cor. 9. 2.*

But Certain it is, *a Mark of Safety will be set on your Foreheads; and a Seal of Salvation, Ezek. 8. 4. Revel. 7. 3.*

E. 4. *Forget ye not to pray God to give his Spirit and Grace unto them who in the Field do, every Campaign, venture their Lives for Us.* You do not think 'em so well prepar'd for Death, as not to need Prayer for their New Birth and Life. You cannot but think, their Service deserveth so much of your Kindness. Or if you can, I must tell you; that if *Gratitude* did not bind you, yet *Self-Interest* wou'd. For, be *our Cause* (as it surely is) very Good, be *their Courage* (as we apprehend it) very Great; yet *their Sinful Courses* may cost Us, and all *Britain*, very dear. The Eminent *Dr. Hammond* was surely of this Mind; when Preaching in *Oxford* before *King Charles I.* He told him with a rare Courage, and an uncommon Plainness; *He wou'd be Routed in all his Designs, while God Danin led up the Van, and The Devil Confound brought up the Rear.*

POSTSCRIPT, to Favourers and Fugitives.

INasmuch as in all Things (and especially in the Work of Drawing nigh unto God) the *Beginning* is by far the *Hardest Part*; but it is generally by every *Archippus*, of All Things the *Least Taught* and *Pressed*.

Oh Reader, Reader, Reader, if thou hast Will, any Will given thee to Draw nigh unto God, thus do thou. If thou wouldest not *be ever Learning, and never come to the Knowledge of the Truth*, thus do thou.

Content thee not with *Hearing the Best Ministers*; nor with *Reading their Best Books*, superadded to Hearing. *Pulpit-Teaching* and *Book-Teaching* are Good, but they are not All. No; unto many have I known them to be as Nothing, or next to Nothing. Unto them must be joyned *Collocutory Teaching, Conference, Fire-side and Table's-End Teaching*. Of the *Advantages* whereof, and of its *Benefits*, much has been said; and a Folio more might be writ, with *Examples of Souls Benefited by it*,

it, and made to tast the great Reward of Observing, *Malach. 2. 7.*

Wherefore, again I call. O Reader, Reader, Reader, do thou thus: *Make Speed, Hast, Stay not*; but Go thou to some Holy Skilful Interpreter. Unto him Open thou thy Heart; Shew unto him the Best and Worst of thy Heart and Walk. Give him to know the Measure of thy Knowledge, of thy Hope, of thy Fear; together with the Number of thy Doubts and Scruples.

Ask his Scripture Advice, his Evangelical Counsel, upon the Whole of thy Case. Upon the said Knowledge given him of thy Soul-Feelings, and thy Conversation-Fruits. I consent that thou brand me for as Absurd an Emperick as any Scorners Chair-man hath as yet done, if much more Good be not done to thy Soul, by thy Minister's thus advantaged Teaching, than by thy Reading a Multitude of Best Books, and Hearing a Multitude of Best Sermons.

They are Many yet living, who profess it; That they could never find it, till in this Way, as well as in others, they did Ask the Way to Zion; and how to joyn themselves to the Lord, in the Everlasting Covenant, never to be forgotten. Shall I add?

Reason much, *Observation* more, and *Experience* most of all, Certifieth the Excellency of Collocutory-Predching: Yes, and no less sheweth the Necessity of it, under which a great Part of our Hearers do lay; insomuch that all Faithful Pulpit-Predching should Alarm unto the Use of it; especially now, that *London Young Timothy's* as well as *Aged Pauls*, have generally every one his Assistant: And by that Means have much more Time for this *bugely less Painful* and *sensibly most Profitable* Kind of Predching.

A Charity far less than the *All-things believing one*, will carry Men to conclude, that Thankfully they will receive all the Opportunities which shall be given 'em for this Exercise. This which is *Richer than Gold*, and together *more sweet than Honey*: Convincing Proofs whereof may in Time succeed these Strictures, if *Place between the Hammer and the Anvil* hinder not.

Being that while *Private Ordinances* are neglected, what Hope is there that *Publick Ordinances* should be much prospered; and that the Gospel should much run and in *Britain (South and North)* be Glorified? Hereof the *Preachers of Self and Fishers*

Fishers for Money, are to be supposed thoughtless: But without all peradventure, as oft as the true *Fishers for Men* do muse on it; every one is full of Matter, the Spirit within him constrains him: The Belly of his Soul is as Wine which hath no Vent; and is ready to burst like Bottles of New Wine.

Kids and Younglings are no small Part of our Congregations: Of all Souls these do specially want Directions. The Great Shepherd of Souls (O may he be imitated by his Under-Shepherds!) carryeth these in his Bosom. This Great Shepherd directeth Weaklings to take the helping Hand of his Under-Shepherds, Cant. 1, 8. To take it both publickly and privately no Doubt, and not by Halves. *Whatever be their Cloathing*, they are Wolves of the same Race, who call Lambs off from following the Great Shepherd or his Under-Shepherds; either socially or singly, publickly or privately.

We Under-Shepherds have not; no, nor hath Christ the Great Shepherd any *New Way unto Heaven* to shew; nor any *New Ordinances*, nor any *New Officers*, but only those of his Institution; All as Old as the New Testament Dispensation. And *We* to us, and *Wo* to the Flocks under our Over-

Overlight, if we shall Give, and they shall
Accept of our Ministrations but by Halves.

an alleg.

*Chrysostom saith, and Luther after him,
Few Ministers will be saved. Salvian says,
Except but a few Twos and Threes of every
Congregation, they are lost Souls. And a
Greater than Both says what concludes;
What manner of Persons ought we (both) to
be in Holy Conversations and Godlinesses?*

*He that hath an Ear, let him Hear this,
which the Spirit saith this Day unto the
Churches. Amen, Amen.*

F I N I S.

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